Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6218th meeting

Monday, 16 November 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Mayr-Harting	(Austria)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Koudougou
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Artiñano
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Araud
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009) (S/2009/585)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009) (S/2009/585)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Iraq, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ad Melkert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Melkert to take a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/2009/585, containing the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009).

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Ad Melkert. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Melkert: I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to inform the Council of the significant developments that have taken place in Iraq over the past few months.

The forthcoming January elections will mark the end of the first full term of a freely elected Parliament in the country's history. It has been a period of great challenges and achievements. While the face of daily life still frequently shows the ugly sides of death and threat, the souls of the overwhelming majority of Iraqis vibrate in reaching at the prospect of a safe and fair society. During that initial period of being a privileged guest in their country, I have been impressed by the energy and the optimism of countless Iraqis, inside and outside the Government, in building a better future.

Success is far from guaranteed as inside and outside forces continue their efforts to impose an agenda of division and destruction. Opposed to that stands the will of the people to participate in the design of the future and to democratically mandate its leaders. That is the true significance of the historic elections ahead, prepared under full Iraqi leadership and responsibility. And that must motivate the United Nations to mobilize all possible support for the process and progress, for Iraqis are receptive and eager to incorporate the values of the United Nations Charter into the building of a new State and a new society.

The United Nations is seen and approached as a trusted partner by many. It remains of the utmost importance that they can continue to count on the Council to enable the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to live up to their expectations. It will have to be a long-term commitment. There will be no shortcuts. Change needs to take root. Change is under way in many aspects. For it to take root, however, these are still early days.

The elections will take place under threat of the repetition of the atrocious attacks at the heart of the Government on 19 August and 25 October. The Security Council's rejection of those horrendous acts and expression of support for the Government to stand firm were very welcome signals. Furthermore, reconciliation within the country and the return of refugees and the internally displaced are still uphill tasks ahead. Neighbourhood relations could and should still greatly improve. The framework of the federal State needs to be solidified, reducing existing tensions and disputes. And importantly, the coming period

should lay the foundation for Iraq's return to the league of middle-income countries, in conjunction with the jump in social development that is within reach if business initiatives are to thrive and oil revenues spent wisely.

Those are still big "ifs", and a big responsibility for a new Government. The upcoming period will also require UNAMI to shift gear and adjust direction along the lines of the request of the Government of Iraq, as well as the mandate set out by the Council in resolutions 1770 (2007) and recently reconfirmed in resolution 1883 (2009). The following five areas in particular will define our agenda of work in the period ahead.

The first of those areas is elections. The pivotal event for Iraq in the coming months is, of course, the January elections for the Council of Representatives. UNAMI has exercised its mandate in the support and assistance provided to the Independent High Electoral Commission in this pre-elections phase.

The Electoral Law was ratified by the Council of Representatives on Sunday, 8 November. The Presidency Council now has 10 days to accept or reject the Law. If a statement is not issued by 19 November, the Law will be adopted automatically. For now, the Independent High Electoral Commission, whilst awaiting adoption of the Law, has based its planning on the election date of 18 January. While the passage of the Electoral Law through the Council of Representatives has been beset by complex negotiations, the debate has been a clear example of the capacity of the political leadership to embrace sovereignty and define the process of people's representation. The special reference in the Law to the possible review of voter registry lists in Kirkuk and other governorates might entail a considerable task for UNAMI after election day.

In preparation for the elections, the voter registry update exercise took place from 22 August to 30 September, accompanied by a national voter education campaign. As a result of these efforts, over 1.5 million Iraqis visited one of 1,082 voter registry centres to confirm their data or to enrol on the register. Eighteen million voter information cards have been distributed nationwide to assist voters in identifying where they should cast their ballot on election day.

The UNAMI electoral assistance team, comprising 20 international technical advisors, continues to provide technical support within each department of the Electoral Commission, enabling adherence to international standards and the delivery of a transparent electoral process. The aim of all efforts is to support an election with an outcome acceptable to the Iraqi people as a basis for policy and progress in the next four years. I should point out that the United Nations cannot guarantee such an outcome. What we can and will do is to undertake a maximum support effort, together with the impressive team of often young Iraqi men and women providing the hands-on legal, technical and communication services that modern election management requires.

We have expressed serious concerns about the very late date of finalizing the Law. It is truly a Herculean task to ensure that basic standards can be met. I consider these concerns to be outweighed by the importance of the primacy of the parliamentary process and of adherence to the constitutional demands essential to strengthening overall authority and stability. On balance, it still is possible and must be made possible if Iraq is to have credible elections on 18 January. However, in order to arrive at that precious moment, the call will be "all hands on deck".

The second point is on the disputed internal boundaries. Soon after election day, it will be time to engage in the serious task of engagement in relation to the internal boundaries of the federal State and its components in terms of competencies and responsibilities, revenue-sharing, service delivery, security arrangements and territorial boundaries. Unless these key issues between the federal Government in Baghdad and the regional Government in Erbil are resolved, the new Iraq will be permanently at risk of being pulled back or dragged into fundamentally destabilizing conflict. The protracted discussion in the framework of the Electoral Law on arrangements for the Kirkuk governorate in particular was yet another reminder of an unfinished agenda.

In outlining our intentions for the months ahead, I would like to share some developments that might point to an improving overall climate for progress.

First, I would like to refer to the High-Level Task Force that addresses issues in connection with the disputed internal boundaries around the border of the Kurdish region and that, over the past few months, has engaged in a number of confidence-building measures aimed at bridging core issues. Senior advisors to the

Iraqi Prime Minister and the Kurdish region President meet regularly under UNAMI auspices. We might now be approaching agreement on measures to expedite property claims, improve transparent and legal detention procedures, and guarantee the right of all Iraqi's to educate their children in their mother tongue. The importance of such practical steps forward cannot be underestimated, as it would be a strong signal to ordinary citizens that at last something will change for the better for many of them.

A second point of considerable importance has been the joint efforts of the Iraqi army and the Kurdish Peshmerga, advised and supported by United States forces, to agree on collective security arrangements in relevant conflict areas in the Ninewa, Kirkuk and Diyala governorates. This is a markedly different evolution compared to the situation this past summer, which was marked by a rapid increase of tensions in various places, with the area around Mosul in particular becoming an almost daily target of vicious attacks over the course of many months. It is also potentially significant for underpinning future political arrangements addressing the outstanding disputed boundaries agenda. UNAMI is therefore closely following, on an information basis, these developments, which hopefully will soon be officially ratified by all sides.

A third factor weighing in for the near future follows from the start of new mandate periods. When I met last week in Erbil with Prime Minister Barham Saleh, no doubt was left as to the new Regional Government's determination to strengthen the basis for stability, economic growth and social progress. Meanwhile, the current Iraqi Government is preparing the transition to a new period in a systematic way, with the support of bilateral and multilateral partners. This raises expectations that political leaders will become more ready to recognize the inextricable linkage between addressing complex political issues that cannot be left in a frozen state and promoting an improved investment climate as part of a solid economic strategy.

The fourth factor that should be mentioned is the need to clarify the legal basis and financial impact of oil extraction now that important new contracts have been signed or are under consideration. The transparency and predictability of contract arrangements and revenue-sharing mechanisms are part and parcel of a sustainable federal State framework. If the current lack of clarity were to remain after the start of a new Government, it would have a detrimental effect on the authority of the State and its credibility vis-à-vis citizens who should benefit from sources of immense richness not seldom located at the doorstep of inconceivable poverty.

These four developments provide a context in which UNAMI can consider the next steps in assisting the clarification of the principles and arrangements within a federal constitutional framework. As it is difficult to see how a new Government programme could be built and agreed upon without strong reference to the different demarcation issues, it may be wise to consider the period immediately after the elections as a window of opportunity to engage key leaders and stakeholders, establish an agenda and embark on the road towards understanding and ultimate agreement, including on article 140 of the Constitution.

My third point is on economic growth and social progress. The aim of all political development is to create an environment in which the citizenry can grow: schools, hospitals, civil administration and private enterprise are all essential components in this development. It is encouraging to note that the Government has put considerable effort into the formulation of the National Development Plan 2010-2014. The process has been supported extensively by different parts of the United Nations family, particularly through the provision of in-depth advice on 12 sectoral analysis papers.

In alignment with the National Development Plan, the United Nations country team has agreed on the first common country assessment for Iraq, focusing on three key areas, namely, governance, inclusive economic growth and ensuring quality essential services. In turn, both the Development Plan and the common country assessment will inform a United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2010-2014 providing a harmonized approach to sustainable development in the coming years. As we speak, this process, which is standard practice in many parts of the world but new for Iraq, has been launched.

Last week, two important meetings took place, both marking the end of an era of first recovery and reconstruction and the start of an era of investment in economic growth and social progress.

On 7 November, at a meeting co-chaired by the Minister of Finance, Mr. Al-Jabr, and the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on the International Compact, Mr. Gambari, partners of Iraq took stock of achievements under the Compact that have, over the past three years, provided an essential instrument for intensifying and solidifying relations between Iraq and the world after decades of devastation and isolation.

At the same time, participants acknowledged the strong call by Prime Minister al-Maliki that now is the time for Iraq to take the lead and for the international community to provide support on the basis of the strategic directions defined by the Government. This also changes the role of the United Nations, from co-chairing to providing secretariat and liaison functions in support of stronger coordination at the sides of both the Government and the international partners.

On 8 November, the Donor Committee of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) held a meeting, near the end of a period in which humanitarian assistance and development projects have been approved to a total of $1.25 billion. As there is still a limited amount, around $135 million, to be disbursed and programmed, it was agreed to extend the Facility into next year only for that purpose. An independent lessons-learned exercise between the United Nations and the World Bank will take place between January and June 2010 and will provide a full assessment of the IRFFI initiative.

The alignment of UNDAF with other bilateral strategies was also discussed, and it was agreed that discussions should continue with all stakeholders. Options were also presented and discussed for a post-IRFFI funding and coordination mechanism, including the establishment of a new United Nations multi-donor trust fund that would build on the achievements of IRFFI. This may be an important way to respond to the invitation to develop an international assistance vision, particularly in support of the National Development Plan.

Addressing the crucial development of the private sector within Iraq, Prime Minister al-Maliki has also called for an extensive programme for foreign direct investment. It is interesting to note growing global interest among potential investors weighing their opportunities in Iraq. Apart from what is an obvious need with regard to the regulation of oil production, it will be important for the next Government to provide a solid legal framework for doing business.

Only with investment and development will the ills of unemployment and poverty be addressed. Twenty-three per cent of the population, or nearly 7 million people, live below the poverty line, with scores of young people unemployed, fuelling discontent and instability. Food insecurity, exacerbated by rising food prices and drought, remains a reality for large sections of the population.

Further, the United Nations has embarked on a number of activities aimed at strengthening governance and the rule of law within Iraq. Of particular significance is the current preparation of the first Iraqi national anti-corruption strategy, including through the participation of an Iraqi delegation in the Conference of State Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The strategy has identified several key areas of engagement, including financing for political party and elections and a civil service code of conduct.

My fourth point is on constructive neighbourhood cooperation. Promoting Iraq's cooperation with and integration in the wider region is part of UNAMI's mandate. Of particular priority is the normalization of regional relations, not least with Kuwait, and the related exit from Chapter VII provisions that naturally is strongly desired by Iraq as the demarcation of a new era after decades of wars and sanctions.

As the report of the Secretary-General on resolution 1859 (2008) is still pending before the Council, I see it as a key priority for UNAMI to facilitate rapprochement and agreement on all outstanding issues. We will seek the consent of both parties to define a mutually agreed agenda, the completion of which should resolve any remaining issues and normalize Iraq's position within the United Nations.

Meanwhile, UNAMI has continued to provide support to the Government of Iraq in relation to the excavation of mass graves and the identification of missing persons, in close connection with the valuable work by Ambassador Tarasov, as reported recently to the Council. It is the intention to continue ongoing capacity-building support for a longer period of time.

Further, the Iraq-Kuwait boundary maintenance project has completed planning for field maintenance.

The Secretariat awaits confirmation from the Government of Iraq that work can proceed and that access will be granted to all boundary pillars. Without such indication, no additional activities can be undertaken. In that regard, I would urge the Government to indicate its consent or, should any outstanding issues exist, to move towards resolution soon.

In other areas and with different neighbouring countries, UNAMI continues to work on promoting and supporting opportunities. It has been a welcome development to note the increase of the flow of water into Iraq, following a series of meetings between Iraq and the Governments of Turkey, Syria and Iran. Yet the challenge remains to have more predictable and longer-term understanding and arrangements in place. This will strengthen the correlation between the voter and his or her representative in the new parliament.

The conclusion of a final formula for a special parliamentary election in the Kirkuk province reflects the determination of the Iraqi political forces to rely on the Constitution and mutual understanding instead of coercion to address this issue. The conclusion of this election represents a further step in the process of dealing with the issue of Kirkuk, a province that remains a symbol of peaceful coexistence among all components of Iraqi society.

The United Nations, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ad Melkert, played an important role in assisting Iraq and its parliament to reach an agreement on the electoral law and, on behalf of the Iraqi Government, I both congratulate them on this achievement and offer profound thanks for their efforts. This achievement stresses the importance of cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations in the policies of the new Iraq.

On 19 August 2009, Baghdad suffered terrorist attacks that targeted a number of sovereign institutions of the Iraqi State, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. These attacks killed or injured 600 people, including many government employees, diplomats and innocent civilians. Had these terrorist acts achieved their full objective, they would have led to the paralysis of the State and its organs, which would have endangered security and stability in Iraq and the region. Therefore, on 30 August 2009, the Prime Minister of Iraq, His Excellency Mr. Nuri Kamel al-Maliki, sent a letter to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to bring this very important issue to his attention and to request that he bring it to the attention of the Security Council in order to establish an independent international inquiry, because the scope and nature of the crimes committed may require investigation outside the jurisdiction of Iraq, and to bring those found guilty to a special international criminal tribunal.

Furthermore, my Government has requested that the Secretary-General nominate a high-level official to assess the 19 August 2009 terrorist attacks and the scope of foreign intervention and its impact on the security and stability of Iraq. This request was mentioned by the President of Iraq, His Excellency Mr. Jalal Talabani, during his address to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, on 24 September 2009 (see A/64/PV.6), and was also mentioned in a letter dated 25 September 2009 from the Foreign Minister, His Excellency Hoshyar Zebari, addressed to the Secretary-General. My Government has also undertaken additional communications with the capitals of friendly countries to explain the dimensions of this request.

On 25 October 2009, Baghdad faced another terrorist attack, targeting the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works and the headquarters of the Baghdad Provincial Council, resulting in a greater number of civilian victims, including children in a kindergarten close to the ministries. This attack proves that the terrorists and the remnants of Saddam's regime are determined to disrupt the political process in Iraq through the direct targeting of Iraqi State institutions.

On 26 October 2009, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Hoshyar Zebari, sent a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in which he linked the terrorist attacks of 19 August 2009 and the terrorist attacks of 25 October 2009, indicating that both attacks were carried out in the same manner and with the same timing, that the same explosive material was used in both attacks and that both targeted key ministries of the State. These criminal attacks emphasize that the objective of these operations is to cripple the capacity of the Iraqi State and its institutions and to disrupt the democratic political process in Iraq. In his letter, the Foreign Minister also emphasized Iraq's request to nominate a high-level

official to assess the scope of foreign intervention in these terrorist attacks. Mr. Zebari emphasized that the level of organization, complexity and scope of these terrorist attacks could not be planned and executed without the support of foreign Powers. The Foreign Minister also requested in his letter to the Secretary-General that this issue be brought to the attention of the Security Council as soon as possible to enable it to take action to deter terrorism and its sponsors. Therefore, the Secretary-General decided to send a team, headed by Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to Baghdad to consult with the Iraqi Government on security and sovereignty issues.

My Government has welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to send an international team headed by Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco to visit Iraq to have preliminary consultations with Iraqi officials on issues related to the security and sovereignty of Iraq and on the information available to the relevant Iraqi authorities regarding the terrorist attacks in Baghdad on 19 August 2009. The Government of the Republic of Iraq has promised to provide all possible facilities for the international delegation to ensure the success of the mission.

During his visit, Mr. Fernandez-Taranco met with the Prime Minister on 2 November 2009, and the Prime Minister stressed during the meeting that

> "terrorism requires an international stand, and we request that the United Nations assist us in stopping regional intervention in our internal affairs, and, to stop the terrorist attacks which target innocent people, we hope that your report will be realistic. We would like to show you the crime scene so you can pass on the details of the incident clearly to the Secretary-General and the Security Council members".

On 4 November 2009, the international team headed by Mr. Fernandez-Taranco held a meeting with the ministerial committee formed by the Council of Ministers to follow up on the consequences of the terrorist attacks against government institutions. My Government believes that sending Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and his team for consultations with the Iraqi Government represents a first step, to be followed by subsequent steps, leading to the fulfilment of my Government's request to uncover those behind the deadly bombings in Baghdad in August and October.

The improved security situation has facilitated the Iraqi Government's central plan of encouraging the return of displaced Iraqis to their country. For example, in the past three months, 370 displaced families have returned to their homes in Baghdad and an additional 1,114 internally displaced families have returned to their homes in the province of Diyala. More families returned to their homes in other provinces also.

The Iraqis' enjoyment of their fundamental rights, as stipulated in the Iraqi Constitution, is a cornerstone of the ongoing political process. The official spokesman for the Iraqi Government recently declared that the Council of Ministers approved the commitments and pledges made by the Iraqi Government in the national report of the Republic of Iraq, which will be submitted to the Human Rights Council and which will show the reality of human rights in Iraq. The report will also highlight the most important challenges facing the Government in its efforts to address the issues of human rights and will include a five-year national plan for education about human rights.

As part of the Iraqi Government's efforts to strengthen the role of women in society and enable them to play vital roles, 50 women lieutenants have recently graduated from the police college to serve in the Iraqi security forces, and the coming period will witness the graduation of a second group, consisting of 100 women lieutenants.

In accordance with the Council of Ministers' decision of 21 October 2009, on 12 November 2009 Iraq signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions. This confirms the Iraqi Government's desire to pursue a foreign policy based on respect for international obligations and cooperation with the international community in the areas of disarmament and non-production of weapons of mass destruction.

At the social and economic levels, under the direct auspices of our Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Nuri al-Maliki, the Iraqi Government held an investment conference on 20 and 21 October 2009 in Washington, D.C. It was attended by a 300-member Iraqi delegation bringing with them investment plans for more than 750 projects in 12 vital sectors. During the conference, more than 220 meetings were held with foreign investors to discuss those projects, and Prime

Minister al-Maliki and United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton addressed the gathering.

On 30 April 2009, a conference on investment in Iraq was held in London, during which the Iraqi Government offered British and European investors 500 investment projects in 11 vital sectors. The Prime Minister headed a large delegation to the conference.

On 5 November 2009, another investment conference, held in Berlin, was attended by more than 200 delegation members. It was headed by the Minister of Industry, His Excellency Mr. Fawzi Hariri, and was attended by the head of the Investment Authority, Mr. Sami al-Araji. Further investment conferences will follow in other capitals throughout the world.

On 7 November 2009, the Second Annual Review Conference of the International Compact with Iraq was held in Baghdad to discuss the direction of Iraq's social and economic policies over the next few years on the basis of the priorities of the International Compact with Iraq. In the final communiqué of the Conference, all agreed that the International Compact with Iraq represents an important instrument for providing international support for Iraq in its political transition and its economic reconstruction.

Oil exports rose to 1,956,000 barrels per day during the month of September 2009, and the Iraqi Government is working to increase exports to 2,150,000 barrels a day in 2010.

As part of the Iraqi Government's ongoing efforts for the reconstruction of Iraq, the Council of Ministers has approved a comprehensive plan to rebuild the service sectors and infrastructure of the country, with an estimated budget of approximately $65 billion. Under the plan, the housing sector will be allocated 38 per cent of the budget, the agricultural sector 27 per cent, the transportation sector 14.2 per cent, the water and sanitation sector 8.4 per cent, the education sector 8.5 per cent, the health sector 5.7 per cent and the communications sector 0.9 per cent.

On 26 October 2009, Iraq was re-elected to the Economic and Social Council for the second time after having received 182 out of 188 votes, which is another achievement for Iraq in the United Nations.

At the regional and international levels, within the framework of regional and international openness, there were recently several high-level visits to Iraq. These included the visit of Mr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, Egyptian Minister of Investment, on 11 August 2009; the visit of Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Foreign Minister of Turkey, also on 11 August; the visit of Mr. Nader Dahabi, Prime Minister of Jordan, on 3 September to sign several memorandums of understanding; the visit of Mr. Joseph Biden, Vice-President of the United States, on 15 September to discuss bilateral relations and developments in the security situation; the visit of Mr. Alexander Saltanov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, on 7 October to develop bilateral ties; and the visit of Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey, on 15 October to begin the preparations of the Supreme Council for Iraqi-Turkish Strategic Cooperation. Ms. Susan Rice, Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, visited Baghdad on 24 October to discuss how to exempt Iraq in the near future from the consequences of the provisions of Chapter VII and to survey the destruction resulting from the 19 August terrorist attacks against the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs received the credentials of Mr. Mohammad Bakhsh Abbasi, Ambassador of Pakistan, on 25 August, and those of Mr. Murat Ozguc, Ambassador of Turkey; Baron Paul von Malexan, Ambassador of Germany; and Mrs. Bronislava Tomasova, Ambassador of the Czech Republic, on 18 October. He received the credentials of Mr. Sherif Shaheen, Ambassador of Egypt; Mr. Petter Olberg, Ambassador of Norway; and Mr. Johan Indekeu, Ambassador of Belgium, on 9 November 2009.

In turn, Mr. Jalal Talabani, President of Iraq, headed the Iraqi delegation participating in the meetings of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, and Vice-President Tariq al-Hashemi headed the Iraqi delegation participating in the summit of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation held in Istanbul on 10 November. Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki visited Washington, D.C., on 20 October. The Minister for Foreign Affairs headed the Iraqi delegation participating in the work of the first ministerial meeting of the Supreme Council for Iraqi-Turkish Strategic Cooperation on 18 September. The Foreign Minister also headed the Iraqi delegation participating in the meetings of the Iraqi-Egyptian Joint Committee on 2 November, at which several memorandums of understanding were signed between the two countries.

During their meeting with the Secretary-General in September, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs affirmed that Iraq no longer poses a threat to international peace and security and has fulfilled many of the international obligations imposed on it over the years, including those related to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

In paragraph 67 of his report on the review of resolutions pertaining specifically to Iraq (S/2009/385), the Secretary-General stated:

> "It is important to recognize that the Iraq of today is very different from Iraq prior to 2003. It is my hope that the Security Council will consider this report with a view to taking appropriate decisions that would help Iraq to fulfil its outstanding obligations in a timely manner."

On that basis, the Government of my country hopes that the Security Council will shoulder its duty and enable Iraq to restore its international standing to that which it held prior to the adoption of Security Council resolutions beginning with resolution 661 (1990).

In conclusion, I would like to stress my Government's gratitude for the role played by UNAMI in Iraq and for the support provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the Iraqi Government's request and on the basis of mutually agreed mechanisms. I would like also to thank the Secretary-General and the members of the Security Council for their support for Iraq and the Iraqi people in their struggle against terrorist groups and their allies, the remnants of Saddam's regime.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.